

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Between Obligation and Ambition: The Performance of Mourning after the Protestant Reformation

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This study has presented a comprehensive overview of the significance of mourning in the early modern English period. The conclusion suggests that there are political and social factors that have influenced and transformed mourning from a practice that is performed in honor of the dead into one that helps the living thrive and prosper.

Mourners found ways to negotiate their spiritual duties and material desires and find a medium between their sacred obligations and their secular ambitions. English noblewomen, in particular, navigate the mourning process and make their voices heard in a patriarchal society that silences women. This self-serving performance of mourning help men and women defy their gender roles at times and conform to them at other times. Studying mourning as a service towards the living help reinforce our understanding of the mourning process after the Protestant Reformation at times and shatter the performance of mourning as we know it at other times. Englishwomen's performance help lay the ground for the following generation of female writers.